

Five, we need to stop excessive and redundant Federal regulations on small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the House to immediately consider my bill that has passed the Government Reform Committee and would help prevent Federal agencies from imposing unnecessary regulations that suffocate small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, let's fully demonstrate our commitment to small businesses by passing these legislative solutions to help small businesses in New York's Hudson Valley and all over the Nation.

TIME FOR A NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, sadly, the war in Iraq is escalating daily. In the first 6 months of 2006, more than 350 American soldiers were killed in action and over 2,400 wounded. This means the United States lost the equivalent of five battalions' worth of ground forces during the period Iraqi political leaders squabbled over how to form a government.

And while forming a government was a positive step, it has made little difference in the daily lives of most Iraqis. Violence has escalated and claims more and more Iraqi lives. According to the U.N., over 14,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in the first 6 months of 2006, including 5,800 in May and June alone. States of emergency, curfews and military operations have not stabilized the country. There are more insurgents, more foreign fighters and more attacks. The signs of sectarian and ethnic cleansing are everywhere. President Bush has said he is going to deploy more troops into Baghdad.

Mr. Speaker, 2006 was supposed to be a year of significant transition in Iraq. But the U.S. remains on the defensive, caught in a civil war.

Mr. Speaker, this war is a miserable failure. It is time for a new direction in Iraq.

□ 1230

SUPPORT OUR SCOUTS ACT

(Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FITZPATRICK of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Boy Scouts of America is one of the most wholesome organizations in this Nation's history, which is why it has earned the Congressional Charter. The Scouts have provided a way for children from the inner city and the country to learn more about themselves, their environment and their role as citizens through active engagement in outdoor and service activities.

Unfortunately, the city of Philadelphia is considering a move that would

seriously hinder scouting in southeastern Pennsylvania. Philadelphia Mayor John Street has told the Cradle of Liberty Council, which serves 87,000 inner city and suburban Scouts, to either pay market value for or vacate the headquarters it has used rent-free since 1928.

Mayor Street has chosen to focus on the differences of opinion he has with the Boy Scouts, rather than embracing and fostering greater cooperation on the issues we can agree on. This is an unfortunate turn of events for the scouting community in my district and the Philadelphia region, especially when the city is in crisis; violent crime and drug use are at all-time highs.

I call on Mayor Street to work with the Scouts to work out an equitable solution to their dispute, and I call on my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 1337, The Support Our Scouts Act, which will reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to scouting.

PREPAREDNESS FIRST ACT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, America needs to be prepared. Whether it is for a commuter train attack or a hurricane, it is clear America must get serious about all hazards preparedness, and that is preparing for all emergencies, whether they are natural or manmade.

Today I am introducing the Preparedness First Act to authorize critical grant programs that our State and local governments already depend upon for all hazards emergency preparedness. The premise of this bill? To ensure that States and localities will have a basic level of preparedness so that they can protect their citizens, communicate with each other and work with the Federal Government during any type of emergency, from earthquakes to terrorist attacks.

Under this bill, all States would receive a base of preparedness funding. This would guarantee that the Federal Government would have an able partner in every State to coordinate preparedness activities. Additional resources would then be made available to address the unique risk and man-made disasters that are posed in each area.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill and put all hazards preparedness first for all Americans.

ISLAMIST PRESENCE IN SOMALIA

(Mr. ROYCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, recently the subcommittee on international terrorism and nonproliferation that I chair held a hearing on the growing Islamist terrorist threat in Somalia. The country's unsecured borders and proximity to the Arabian Peninsula

provide a potential transit point and safe haven for terrorists there. Especially worrying is the powerful presence of the Union of Islamic Courts, which took over Mogadishu last month.

This group is headed by a known associate of al Qaeda and aims to introduce Sharia law throughout Somalia. Mr. Speaker, we are living in an age in which threats in faraway places can hit us at home.

The events unfolding in Somalia mark a critical point in our struggle against Islamist terrorism. Afghanistan is the lesson. I remember those on Afghanistan that said that the Taliban offered stability in that country because the country was deeply divided.

I remember testifying that the Taliban and their support for terror training could lead to more World Trade Center-style attacks on America. That was 11 years ago. Now Somalia demands our focused attention.

IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S TROUBLING COMMENTS ON ISRAEL

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, do not think there was an epiphany this morning when the leader of Iraq, duly elected, met at the White House to say that he would join, his country would join with other Arab states condemning terror. You would have thought the word "terror" was invented this morning. The audacity for him to look at us and say, for those who are skeptical about the war on terror, there is nobody skeptical in this House, either side, about the war on terror.

But when his legislature condemns Israel, "we need to stop the Israeli criminal aggression," and they voted on that unanimously, you come into our house, as we would say in the Bronx, even though I am from New Jersey, and think that we are supposed to forget everything.

There is terror in Iraq, and there is terror in Israel. And if you think Hezbollah is the Guardian Angels, you are quite mistaken. And we need to understand what is going on in this House. Turn the country back around again. Sixty-five percent of the American people say we are going in the wrong direction, and we continued this morning.

CREATIVE FEDERALISM IN HEALTH CARE

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, everyone understands that we have a real challenge in health care with over 45 million Americans without adequate insurance coverage. And Washington is in a logjam with a national solution elusive.